BOULEVARD

AOR/MELODIC ROCK FANZINE

MARCH ISSUE

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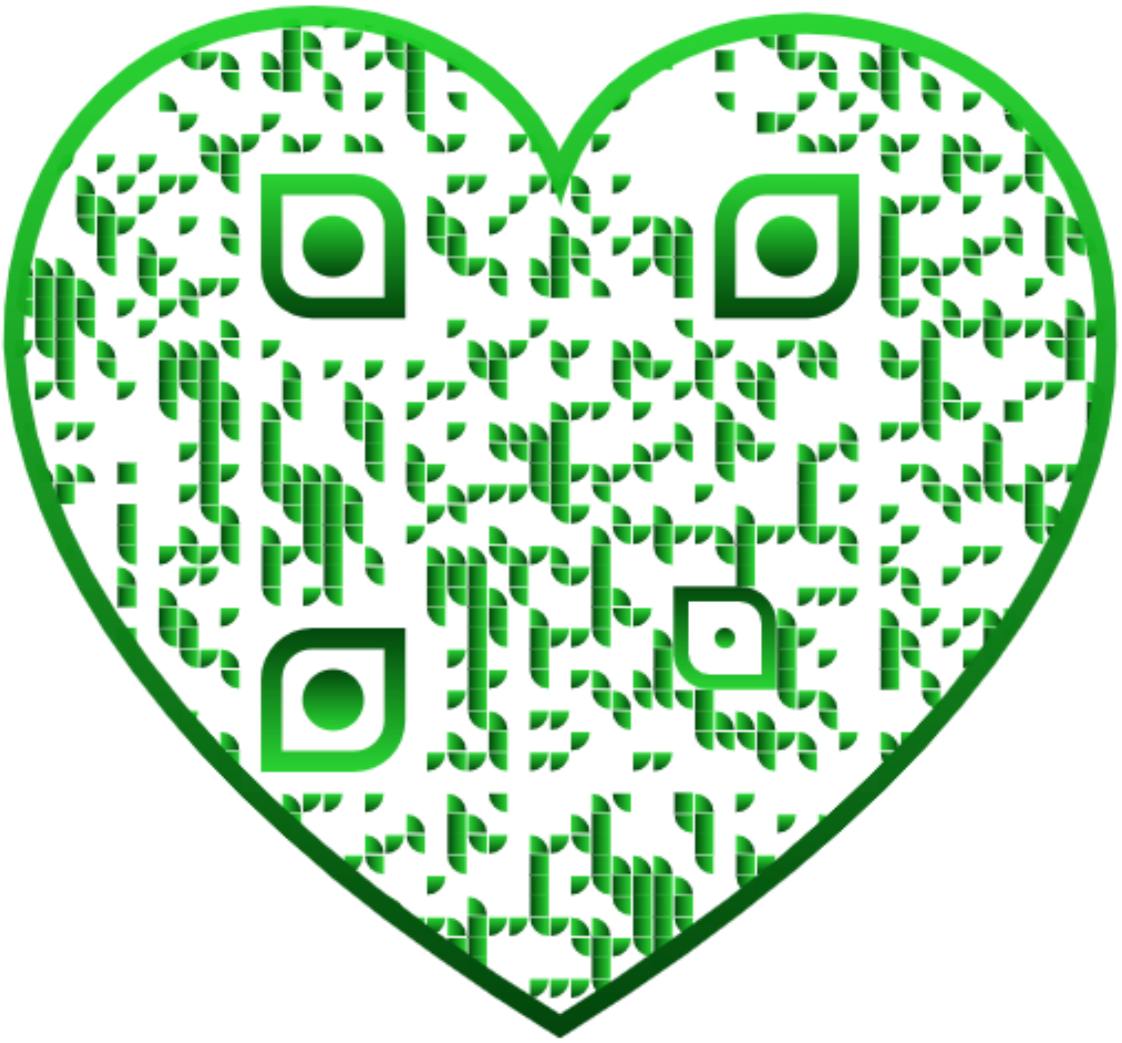

EDITORIAL

Dear Reader,

Welcome to BOULEVARD'S Review of'87 issue. This is a special ish which we hope will serve as an introduction to

a) the type of music we like
and
b) the type of bands likely to be featured in the fanzine.

Our aim is not to 'show off' as some other 'zines do by posing about what albums we have that you, the reader, have no chance of obtaining. Instead, we intend to review as many albums and demo tapes, which come out over a 3 month period, as we can. Of course this means you may have some of the albums reviewed but, if by reading a review (all of which are unbiased we assure you) a new band are brought to your attention, then all has not been in vain has it?

Most of the albums reviewed in BOULEVARD can be obtained from any good import shop (we recommend SHADES in London) but if you have any difficulties, just drop us a line at the address below and we'll do our best for you. (Anything which we cannot get has not been recorded!)

If you write off to any of the bands whose demo tapes are reviewed we would be grateful if you would tell them where you heard of them first.

Also, if you know of any local bands who are looking for publicity then give them our address and we will help them in any way we can.

We hope you enjoy BOULEVARD. If you do (or don't) then send us a letter.

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PROMO VIDEOS OF '87.

1 EUROPE - Cherokee.
2 CHER - I Found Someone.
3 NIGHTRANGER - Secret Of My Success.
4 STAN BUSH - The Touch.
5 BONFIRE - Sweet Obsession.
6 JOURNEY - I'll Be Alright Without You.
7 GLEN BURTNICK - Follow You.
8 WHITE LION - Wait.
9 WHITESNAKE - Is This Love?
10 KISS - Reason To Live.

FILMS/VIDEOS OF '87.

1 ROBIN WILLIAMS - Live Video.
2 EVIL DEAD 2.
3 TRANSFORMERS.
4 HELLRAISER.
5 3 AMIGOS.
6 THE FLY.
7 STEEVE MARTIN - Live Video.
8 LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS.
9 BEVERLEY HILLS COP 2.
10 CROCODILE DUNDEE.

BOOKS OF '87.

(Due to the re-publishing of books, these are just the best ten read during the year).

1 STRANGERS - Dean R.Koontz.
2 SON OF THE ENDLESS NIGHT - John Farris.
3 DISTURB NOT THE DREAM - Paula Trachtman.
4 BORED OF THE RINGS - Harvard Lampoon.
5 PHANTOMS - Dean R.Koontz.
6 RELICS - Shaun Hutson.
7 COMMUNION - Frank Laura.
8 THE PET - Charles L.Grant.
9 EQUAL RITES - Terry Pratchett.
10 NIGHTFALL - John Farris.

JOHN NORUM: HAMMERSMITH ODEON

JOHN NORUM'S U.K. debut performance (supporting ACE FREHLEY) was, to say the least, stunning. The ex-Europe guitarist tore the ODEON apart, delivering a set of Melodic Rock crammed full of breathtaking solos. As soon as opener "ETERNAL FLAME" was under way, you could tell that John and his band (Goran Edman on vocals, Marcel Jacob on Bass, Mats Lindfors on Rythm guitar/keys and Hempo Hobo on drums) had travelled all that way to do only one thing, destroy London, which they did.

The choice of tracks was excellent. Following "ETERNAL FLAME" was his new single "LOVE WAS MEANT TO LAST FOREVER" and then "SOMEONE ELSE HERE" which saw John taking over on vocals. His voice held up well, but it was his guitarwork which stole the show on the next song, a cover of the VINNIE VINCENT classic "BACK ON THE STREETS". When the solo came round John chose to play it just like the album version, slow and melodic, but then at the end of the song he tagged on a solo of such staggering speed that even a VINNIE VINCENT fan sat nearby was left open mouthed!

At this point I thought he had reached the highlight of the set but no, he just got better and better. "HEART OF STONE" (from EUROPE'S Final Count Down' album) followed and it was as good as his old band performed it last year. Next up came a duo of LIZZY classics "Don't Believe A Word" and "BAD REPUTATION" which sounded very similar to the originals as John's voice almost exactly mimicked that of PHIL LYNOTT. Then it was back to the "TOTAL CONTROL" album for "LET ME LOVE YOU" before finishing with my all-time favourite EUROPE song "SCREAM OF ANGER"(which was co-written by Marcel incidentally). The band absoluteley destroyed this cut, attacking it with an enthusiasm which is so seldom seen in a support group.(A ridiculous situation really as John Norum blew ACE FREHLEY away with room to spare in every department.)

JOHN NORUM HAS ARRIVED. BE THERE OR BE TASTELESS!

REVIEW OF '87

ALBUMS OF THE YEAR.

1 MICHAEL BOLTON - The Hunger.
2 SAGA - Wildest Dreams.
3 JOHN NORUM - Total Control.
4 BRIAN M^{C}DONALD GROUP - Desperate Business.
5 BONFIRE - Fireworks.
6 TREAT - Dreamhunter.
7 CHER - Cher.
8 AGENTZ - Stick to Your Guns.
9 URGENT - Thinking Out Loud.
10 LEATHERWOLF - Leatherwolf.
11 JIMMY DAVIS & JUNCTION - Kick The Wall.
12 REFUGEE - Burning From The Inside Out.
13 HAYWIRE - Don't Just Stand There.
14 JEFF PARIS - Wired Up.
15 STAN BUSH & BARRAGE - Stan Bush & Barr
16 NIGHTRANGER - Big Life.
17 DOKKEN - Back For The Attack.
18 STAGE DOLLS - Commandos.
19 KANE ROBERTS - Kane Roberts.
20 VENGEANCE - Take It Or Leave It.
21 FATE - A Matter Of Attitude.
22 PETRA - This Means War.
23 LOVERBOY - Wildside.
24 MARC JORDAN - Talking Through Pictures
25 GLEN BURTNICK - Heroes And Zeroes.

VOCALISTS OF ' 87.

1 MICHAEL BOLTON.
2 CHER.
3 MICHAEL OLIVIERI (Leatherwolf).
4 JIMMY DAVIS.
5 TORSTEIN FLAKNE (Stage Dolls).
6 CLAUS LESSMANN (Bonfire).
7 GORAN EDMAN (John Norum).
8 DON DOKKEN.
9 BRIAN M^{C}DONALD.
10 ROBERT ERNLUND (Treat).

KEYBOARD PLAYERS OF ' 87.

1 MICHAEL SADLER (Saga).
2 MARC JORDAN.
3 TOMMY TINDALL (Agentz).
4 ANDERS WIKSTROM (Treat).
5 PETE STEINER (Fate).
6 HOWARD HELM (Refugee).
7 JOHN LAWRY (Petra).
8 JOHN SCOTT (Jimmy Davis).
9 JONATHAN CAIN (Michael Bolton).
10 WIX (Tommy Shaw/Paul Carrack).

GUITARISTS OF '87.

1 JOHN NORUM.
2 IAN CRICHTON (Saga).
3 CAREY HOWE/GEOFFREY GAYER (Leatherwolf).
4 JASON SABO (Agentz).
5 REB BEACH (Brian M^{C}Donald).
6 NEAL SCHON (Michael Bolton/Glen Burtnick).
7 GEORGE LYNCH (Dokken).
8 BRAD GILLIS/JEFF WATSON (Nightranger).
9 MARVIN BIRT (Haywire).
10 KANE ROBERTS.

DRUMMERS OF '87.

1 CURT CRESS (Saga).
2 MIKE BAIRD (Michael Bolton).
3 DEAN ROBERTS (Leatherwolf).
4 PETE HERMANSSON (John Norum).
5 JOHN CAPPADONA (Agentz).
6 STEINAR KROKSTAD (Stage Dolls).
7 KENNY MARY (Bonfire).
8 JERRY MAROTTA (Cher).
9 D.W.ADAMS (Brian M^{C}DONALD).
10 BRIAN DOERNER (Refugee).

BASS PLAYERS OF '87.

1 MARCEL JACOB (John Norum).
2 RANDY JACKSON (Michael Bolton).
3 SCOTT SMITH (Loverboy).
4 JOSE FERRO (Agentz).
5 MARTIN JONES (Refugee).
6 PAUL CARMAN (Leatherwolf).
7 JIM CRICHTON (Saga).
8 JOERG DEISINER (Bonfire).
9 RONNIE SWITZER (Haywire).
10 KEN SIEWERSTON (Treat).

PRODUCTION OF '87.

1 KEITH OLSEN - Wildest Dreams (Saga).
2 PAUL DE VILLIERS - Talking Through Pictures (Marc Jordan).
3 MICHAEL BOLTON - The Hunger & Cher.
4 BJORN NESSJOE - Commandos (Stage Dolls
5 JOSE FERRO - Stick To Your Guns (Agent
6 MICHAEL WAGENER - Fireworks (Bonfire).
7 JOHN NORUM/THOMAS WITT - Total Control (John Norum).
8 TOM ALLOM - Thinking Out Loud (Urgent)
9 ALBERT BOEKHOLT - Dreamhunter (Treat).
10 JACK HOLDER/DON SMITH - Kick The Wall (JIMMY DAVIS).

TREAT

From pretty humble beginnings, Swedish rockers TREAT have become one of the best bands around at the moment.

It all started (product-wise) back in '85 with SCRATCH AND BITE, a bitty affair which only hinted at things to come on tracks like "Got You On The Run" with its instant singalong chorus and uptempo beat and the amazingly BONJOVI-ish chant of "You Got Me". The only other tracks worth mentioning are the almost immense ballad "We Are One" which never quite manages to live up to the excellent keyboard hook and "Run With The Fire", a good old-fashioned romp complete with Hammond organ!

Incidentally, this was the only TREAT album to feature drummer M. WILLIAM DAHLBERG. He, of course, left to form the brilliant DALTON (are there any crap bands in Scandanavia?)

Anyway, on to the second album,'86 PLEASURE PRINCIPLE was one of the best melodic rock releases of the year. Every song, from opening cut "Revit Up" (beautifully simplistic foot stomper) to the awesome closer "Ride Me High" (originally produced for the band by none other than Jean Beauvoir!) is a classic. Well worth the import price, if only for the cover-version of B.O.C.'s "Eyes On Fire". (TREAT delete the CULT on this one).

'87 saw the release of their finest mements, on vinyl, yet, DREAMHUNTER. Another change of drummer for this opus. Out went LEIF SUNDIN and in came pretty boy JAMIE BORGER. Put the album on the turntable and your ears are assaulted by huge powerchords and immense vocal harmonies much in the same way that ICON (RIP) and more recently BONFIRE have done. Perfect examples of this style are opener "Sole Survivor" and "One Way To Glory". At other moments you'd swear you were hearing the best song AUTOGRAPH have ever made, but in reality you'd be listening to "You're The One I Want". Even the mighty DOKKEN are given a run for their money on closing cut " The Winner". My personal faves though are "The Outlaw" with its moody intro and the EUROPE flavoured swagger of "World Of Promises" featuring the most infectious hook this side of JOEY and Co.

So, what next for TREAT? Well, a UK release for DREAMHUNTER would fo them no harm at all especially if they could gain some airplay with the afore mentioned "World Of Promises". Also, I suggest that they get together with a similar type of group i.e. BONFIRE for a UK tour.
Now wouldn't that be interesting?

BONFIRE

These guys first exploded onto the scene a couple of years back with their fine debut album "DON'T TOUCH THE LIGHT" on the RCA label. Nine songs (eight really as the first track is an intro) of classy, well played Melodic Rock produced by Dave Hutchings. This is an album well worth checking out as cuts like "STARIN' EYES" "DON'T TOUCH THE LIGHT", "LONGING FOR YOU" and the amazing SCORPIONS-style ballad "YOU MAKE ME FEEL" match up to anything ever recorded by a European band.

But it's their second album "FIREWORKS" which has really brought them to the forefront of the scene. Produced (excellent job as usual) by Michael Wagener, "FIREWORKS" contains ten (eleven on C.D.) tracks of monumental brilliance. Not a duff track in sight! Just lend an ear to "SLEEPING ALL ALONE" which was co-written by Jack 'GOD' Ponti of SURGIN (the man responsible for BONJOVI'S "SHOT THROUGH THE HEART" classic) or the awesome "AMERICAN NIGHTS" and try to stop yourself from singing along to them by the second time you play them.

After recording the album the band set about finding a new drummer to replace

Dominic Huelshorst who left shortly before the recording of "FIREWORKS". They found an ample replacement in Edgar Patrick (ex-SINNER) and set about touring their home country of GERMANY (with STRANGEWAYS in support) extensively.

So give BONFIRE a listen and watch out for the FIREWORKS (sorry).

MICHAEL BOLTON.

MICHAEL BOLTON, that name conjures up all that symbolises A.O.R.

A song writing genius, who over the past few years,'87 inparticular has given his all to write, play, sing and produce the best A.O.R. available.

Not only has Michael Bolton made what are probably the three best Melodic A.O.R.L.P.'S of the '80's.
MICHAEL BOLTON, EVERYBODY'S CRAZY, and THE HUNGER,

From the first time I heard the debut album I could tell that the man had something special. Helped out by friends "BOB KULICK", and BRUCE KULICK on guitars. MARK CLARKE , bass MARK MANGOLD keyboards (both from the late lamented TOUCH) ALDO NOVA, CHUCK BURGI, SCOTT ZITO the list goes on.

This first album showed Michael Bolton's song writing off to perfection, from opening cut "FOOLS GAME" with its catchy chorus and great riff, to the awesome "HOMETOWN HERO" who's teriffic keyboards soar throughout the song driving it along. Then to the highpoint of the album "PARADISE" sung by Bolton and played soley by Scott Zito, each sont a MASTERPIECE.

Two years on and "EVERYBODY'S CRAZY" is released, totally different from the first. No drummer this time, just a machine. Still [illegible] machine,programmed to blow up your speakers he still uses his mates to make the record, Bruce Kulick Mark Managold, Dennis Feldman. Each to be found playing on other fine A.O.R. L.P.'S But this time he also roped in some great backing singers to give the overall vocal sound a kick. These being "PEPPY CASTRO" (Ex BALANCE), "TERRY BROCK (now with STRANGEWAYS) and "JOE CERISANO".

"EVERYBODY'S CRAZY" is I think without a doubt the finest slice of Melodic A.O.R. Ever Recorded. From opening track "SAVE OUR LOVE", to last cut "DON'T TELL ME IT'S OVER", the quality is unbelievable. This is the one other young bands should look to better. A very hard task I should think.

And so to '87 and "THE HUNGER" a slight departure from the brashness of "EVERYBODY'S CRAZY", more keyboards, less guitar, but still a damn fine L.P.

This time Michael Bolton brought in ex-member of "JOURNEY" Jonathan Cain, Neal Schon and Rany Jackson to help with the recording.

Each track with the potential to be a commercial single, and if there was any justice in the world Michael Bolton would have the hit he so richley deserves. Maybe, with his new single tho old Ottis Reading number "DOCK OF THE BAY" he'll get it.
WE CAN HOPE SO.

So, it only leaves me to say, Michael Bolton is a legend in A.O.R. music and his albums are an essential purchase for all Melodic Rock A.O.R. Fans.

LONG MAY HE CONTINUE!

VANDAMNE

VANDAMNE are five good looking guys from Gloucestershire who are destined for great things if the 3-track demo in my cassette-deck is anything to go by. The band consists of Trev Short (Vocals), Pete Gentil (Bass), Andy Powell (Drums) Pete Southern (Guitar), and the amazingly named Ashley Lymer (Guitar), and at the time of recording the demo, had been together for just six months. They describe their music as a mixture of American class melody and European power.

First track up is "LUV AIN'T A CRIME" which opens with a KING KOBRA-like (circa "READY TO STRIKE") harmony guitar intro. This gives way to a very DOKKEN-like song full of crunching powerchords and searing solos. The vocals at times sound a mite strained but this adds to the feel of the song and could easily have been avoided if the guys had had more studio time. (Shorts vocals are actually very good when he sings instead of trying to growl a la BRIGHTON ROCK) At the end of the song, as it fades out, are infectious chants quite similar to, say, BONJOVI or GLEN BURTNICK. I would personally rate this song higher than anything on DOKKEN'S last album.

Next up is "SHOUT AT THE NIGHT". Built on a riff so dirty it makes RATT sound like JOURNEY, and containing excellent guitar work and drumming, this song sounds like it would really burn live.

Finally, we have "WALKING IN YOUR NIGHTMARE", which is ushered in by some nice keyboards quite like KING KOBRA again. The song actually reminds me lirycally of ALICE COOPER(?) for some reason, possibly because at times the lead vocals are doubled up, a style which ALICE uses a lot. Don't let this put you off though, as it just goes to show the diversity of the bands material.

All the songs on this demo feature well thought out arrangements (more complicated than they at first seem), good production and immense guitar work.(Possibly the best twin guitar attack in the UK at the moment). I can only assume that no record companies have heard the material on offer here as I'm sure if they did then VANDAMNE would be signed up immediately. At a time when DOKKEN, current darlings of the melodic rock fans, are playing it very safe, VANDAMNE could just have that element of high-wire danger to steal their crown. (And that's no idle claim). If you don't (or do) believe me then drop the guys a line:

Contact VANDAMNEc/o CHRIS GENTIL
50 FOXES BANK DRIVE
CIRENCESTER
GLOUCESTERSHIRE
GL7 1WA.

ROULETTE

Something is stirring down in WALES. Their name is ROULETTE, a bunch of guys dedicated to the Melodic Rock way. Formed as a four piece band back in July '86 they played anywhere they could locally to get enough money together in order to record a 3 track demo cassette "ROULETTE '86" in November. The people on the demo were Darren Powell (Vocals), Gary Hughes (Guitar/keys), Richard Skinner (Bass) and Mark Griffiths (Drums). The tracks on offer "FANTASY", "TWO HEART" and "ANYWAY YOU CAN" strangely sound nothing at all like the bands influences (BONJOVI, DEF LEPPARD, QUEEN, LIZZY) and remind me of such mega-acts as STARZ and TEAZE. Coming across very much as a good-time, uptempo band, despite the limitations of the line-up, the demo is worthy of your investigation.

After recording the demo the band augmented the line-up with Julian Bevan (Guitar) to give Gary more freedom on the keys and lead guitar. The guys are currently playing as many concerts as possible (they really are dedicated) in the hope of releasing a self-financed single in the summer. I for one wigh them every sucess as what we need right now is a band with a sense of fun as well as the talent to succeed. GOOD LUCK GUYS!!

CONTACT:
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15 AVONDALE COURT
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CF39 9NH.

ALBUM REVIEWS.

CHINA: CHINA (VERTIGO)
9/10

Is there any end to the plethora of superb melodic rock coming from the continent at the moment? What with bands such as MAD MAX SINNER and my faves BONFIRE all producing the goods, surely it would be asking too much for these 5 guys from SWITZERLAND to come up with anything above average.

Imagine my delight then, at the magnitude of this opus. The recipe for CHINA is quite simple; add the melody of TREAT and BONJOVI to the power - riffing of DOKKEN, KROKUS and the SCORPIONS, give the mixture a full production (courtesy of DIRK STEFFENS) and allow to boil for about 40 minutes!

The first real 'song' is "SHOUT IT OUT" which is as good an example of what CHINA are all about as you're likely to find. Crashing powerchords and fluent, yet melodic solos courtesy of Freddy Laurence (the name rings a bell but I just can't place him) and Claudio Matteo, rock solid rythm work from drummer John Dommen and bassist Marc Lynn all topped off by Math Shiverow's excellent vocals. (I really love the power of European singers at the moment. They seem to be less afraid of going for it' than their U.S. counterparts).

Killer cuts are the more melodic ones, naturally, such as "HOT LOVIN' NIGHTS", "ONE SHOT TO THE HEART" and "BACK TO YOU". (Incidentally, written by Fernando Von Arb of KROKUS, this one, and it's better than anything they've produced in years) but the heavier tracks still have that melodic edge which make them more than just "Fillers".

The C.D. version of "CHINA" has an extra track "DON'T LOOK BACK" which easily justifies the extra cost I assure you. It is as good as anything TREAT or BONFIRE have ever recorded with its uptempo beat and infectious hook-line. This is what melodic rock is all about.

RICK SPRINGFIELD: ROCK OF LIFE (RCA)
10/10 (can't give any more)

I don't know how he does it and I just don't care! Every album this guy makes is better than the last and considering the fact that, to me, his last album TAO redifined high-tech AOR that's no simple task.

ROCK OF LIFE, Rick's first album in 3 years, is more of an experience than as album. Produced to crystal-clear perfection by genius KEITH OLSEN (the man just doesn't know that the term over-produced exists and I personally agree that there is no such thing) and featuring such excellent musos as CURT CRESS (Drums), DAN HUFF(the man who REALLY plays lead guitar on many tracks on WHITESNAKES '87 opus. Just listen to 'Is This Love' and then tell me it isn't DAN). ALAN PASQUA (Keys) and of course, RANDY JACKSON on Bass, this is quite simply the ultimate album.

Opening track, and current single, 'ROCK OF LIFE",sets the scene with its almost Squier-like riff with a touch of reggae thrown in for good measure. Perfect harmonies (apparantly after 3 attempts to get the vocals right in L.A. they flew out to the Bahamas. Now that is what I call being a perfectionist) really make this song grow on you but I fear without massive airplay, the British public will miss out on it. Following on comes my choice for a single "HONEYMOON IN BEIRUT". Very original title - immense track, made that little bit better by the addition of glass breaking and babies crying in the background. "WORLD START TURNING" is next up and continues the high standard of originallity (no two songs sounding the same one the whole album yet everything gels together amazingly well). On this track we hear Rick at his vocal best and by now you begin to realize that he is much more than just a teen idol. Every song actually has a very deep, heart felt message in the lyrics. I personally feel that he is the most articulate, underrated lyric writer in the world today!

CONTD

Perfect examples of this are in the next cut "ONE REASON" where Rick explains his feelings on Religion. When he says he's

"Trying to get faith from the $8.50 paper backs
Hoping they'll show me the way (the way to what?)

you get the impression that he's none too pleased with the commerciality of Religion in the U.S.

Even when he sings love songs Rick seems to have that little bit extra as "SOUL TO SOUL" shows. Check out the lyrics;

"We don't make love so much as
Have a bedroom crucifixion
Any love that you recieve only seems
To be skin deep."

Don't you just feel sorry for him?

Flip the disc over and you have "TEAR IT ALL DOWN". My fave track ever by Rick. This is quite simply the most perfect song ever written. From its slow, swaggering intro to its infectious chorus nothing about this song could be better. Christ there's even a guitar solo (a rare and usually unneccessary occurence on Rick Springfields tracks) courtesy of long standing cohort TIM PIERCE! Lyrically, Rick emotes on the problems of bringing up children in the media influenced '80's using lines like;

"Meanwhile the men who claim God on their side
Spit out their message and sell me a ride
While we look for idols inside of a fashion magazine".

Completing the album are "WOMAN" (another definite hit single) "DREAMIN COLOUR", "HOLD ON TO YOUR DREAM"(built on a bass/drum beat very similar to the old Motown classic 'You Can't Hurry Love') and "YOU THINK YOUR'RE GROOVY" (a re-working of the Marriot/Lane classic). All totally brilliant and all given that extra special treatment by Rick. His use of vocal harmonies and overlapping lead are instrumental in giving everything he touches that extra dimension.

Already, this opus is almost guaranteed to be my top album of '88 (and it's only the first week in February!) I just can't imagine anyone coming up with a collection of songs so good as to displace it. So, there's a challange to all you mortals out there. Can you de-throne the immortal king of A.O.R. I doubt it, but it should be a very interesting struggle.

WHAT IF: WHAT IF (RCA)
2/10

What if this album is a let-down? What if no-one buys it? What if you don't bother making another one? I hope not! This is one of the most boring albums I have heard since Mr Mister's last attempt. Considering the fact that the band consists of such AOR luminaries as the legendary TOMMY FUNDERBURCK (check out the credits for backing vox on most AOR albums for proof) on vocals, LARRY WILLIAMS (a man who has played for LAURA BRANIGAN and EYE TO EYE to name just two) on bass/keys and BOB WILSON (no not the guy who introduces Football Focus, although judging by his performance on this album he should consider a second career!) on drums this really is a dull effort. Opening title track "WHAT IF" sets the scene for the whole album. Even after half a dozen plays not one single hook sticks in my mind.

In fact, the only reason the album deserves 2/10 is that GLEN BURTNICK provides a song , "PERFECT WORLD", which, although for him is not very good, is still the best track on offer.

AVOID UNLESS YOU HAVE INSOMNIA!!!

IMPELLITTERI: MINI LP (RELATIVITY)
7/10

This 4 track mini-lp by guitar god Chris Impellitteri (the name takes longer to say than the album takes to play!) may not seem like suitable fodder for this mag, but I have found that many AOR fans are really into all these new "I can play anything faster than you can" maestros.

Impellitteri himself plays guitar and bass and is joined by,Loni Silva on drums and the much improved Bob Rock on vocals (anyone remember the Warrior demos?) Rock actually comes across quite like Graham Bonnet at times on this album. Yes, he really has improved that much!

First track up "LOST IN THE RAIN" kicks in with a fast riff but is still a fairly melodic ditty. Of course the guitar work is both exemplary and up in the mix but hey, what did you expect? This ain't TOTO you know.

Having said that though, second track "PLAY WITH FIRE" is a tad too heavy for my delicate ears, almost a M^{C}ALPINE-like riff with vocals added as a last measure. The solo, though also M^{C}alpine-like is amazing and almost saves the song.

Flip the album (?) over and you have "BURNING" which opens up with a flourish of fretboard fury before calming down into a quite superb song full of chunky chords, superb vocals (Rock almost bursting through the ozone layer on this one) and amazing double-bass drumwork from Silva.

Finally though comes Impellitteri's best cut yet. "I'LL BE SEARCHING" is the best song I've heard by a guitar god. The opening sequence reminds me of MALMSTEEN'S "YOU DON'T REMEMBER" but I'm not sure why. This is the track for you if you're a Melodic Rock Fan. Lots of harmony vocals on this one! The solo is unbelievable, coming on like YNGWIE on speed (I kid you not) Worth the import price if you like you're rock HARD and your guitar FAST (and I mean FAST!!)

WINTER'S REIGN: THE BEGINNING (LOOP RECORDS)
4/10

The debut album from Irish trio WINTER'S REIGN is something of a mixed bag. Some of the tracks on offer are quite decent, despite the blatant plaganisms, especially opening cut "WHITE FURY". If Joey Tempest heard this one he'd be laughing all the way to court! The main problem with the material is that it just isn't consistent enough. Tracks like "ANN MARIE" are alright first time round, but don't make you want to put the album back on. Musicianship on the album is of a high standard and MICK CAVENAGH'S guitar work especially stands out. On the whole though this is an album to borrow rather than buy, even if just to hear "THE FINAL COUNTDOWN" oops sorry, I mean "WHITE FURY".(Honestly).

PROPHET: CYCLE OF THE MOON (MEGAFORCE)
10/10

As any real AOR fan knows, PROPHET produced one of the best albums of '85. An excellent disc full of potential classics like "STREET SECRETS" and "POWERPLAY" which, given better production, could have matched anything by any so-called POMP-GODS.

Those 'real' fans will also know that ex-SURGIN lead vocalist Russell Arcara (who incidentally sounds nothing at all like BONJOVI. The only connection is that SURGIN'S material was similar to early JOVI, due mainly to the fact that Jack Ponti, main songwriter in SURGIN, was an old sparring partner of JON BONJOVI'S) is one of the best and most powerfull singers in the world today.

Therefore you would expect a collaboration between PROPHET and ARCARA to be nothing short of perfection wouldn't you? You wouldn't be dissapointed either.

"CYCLE OF THE MOON" is phenomenal. Superb songs, outstanding musicanship crystal clear production and oh those vocals.....

The album doesn't really hit you at first, as the opening title track, is

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quite what you would expect really. Very moody and intense. It's not until second track "CAN'T HIDE LOVE" begins that you realize something special is on your deck. This track, and the following couple, are quite simply the best trio of songs I've ever heard. These tracks are exactly the kind of songs which never get mentioned in reviews, something which never fails to amaze me. If one is reviewing an AOR album then one should rave the more commercial, catchy songs and not the heavier ones. So here goes.....

"CAN'T HIDE LOVE" is a hybrid of BONJOVI'S "RUNAWAY" keyboards and a hook so infectious you should be able to be vaccinated against it. (not that you'd want to be). When the guitar/keyboard solo ends and the harmonies begin you'll think it's your birthday.

Next up is " ON THE RUN" (for some reason the same track is presented as "As One" on the C.D. version) with its off-beat, staggering drumming and a keyboard solo to end all keyboard solos. (Never mind the speed, listen to the melody and sounds)

Finally, along comes "SOUND OF A BREAKING HEART" which if anything is better than "CAN'T HIDE LOVE". The guys here sound more like SURGIN than on any other track, though this is only during the verses. The chorus, on the other hand, pushes the limits of melody further than you ever dreamed possible. A definite hit single this one, you'll be singing it in the bath for weeks. (But don't forget to keep topping up the water!)

For fans of slightly heavier tracks though there's the brilliant "FRONT LINE", even "ASYLUM" which reminds me a bit of old POMP-GODS SPYS. Not only have the songs improved though, so has the musicianship, as "HYPERSPACE" shows. On this track PROPHET set off on a 100mph romp into jazz-fusion territory and give the so-called NEW GUITAR MASTERS a serious run for their arpeggio's!

ONE DAY ALL ALBUMS WILL BE MADE THIS WAY!!

TORINO: CUSTOMIZED (FM)

/10

Listening to the debut album by Liverpool based TORINO you would never believe that the line-up has only been settled since April '87. What they have come up with is a very commendable, tight sounding disc full of Melodic Rock in the vein of U.S. Megastars BONJOVI and AUTOGRAPH. The band centres around Stuart Fox (Vocals) and Brian Mckeown (Guitar), with this pairing responsible for writing most of the material on offer. The line-up is completed by the solid rythm section of Brian Dixon (Drums) and Paul Diamond (once a member of the infamous ROX, on Bass) who, whilst never really contributing anything out of the ordinary, provides a tough backbeat from which the guitars and vocals can really pour on the power.

The first time I played the album BONJOVI sprang to mind but the more I listen to some of the tunes ("NEVER SURRENDER" and "CALL OF THE WILD" in particular) the more they sound like AUTOGRAPH songs (which is no bad thing).

Best cuts have to be "OUT OF THE FIRE" with it's neat keyboard intro and amazing guitar solo and "DANCE CRAZY", a difinite live killer which comes across as an amalgam of "WAR MACHINE" (Kiss) and "DANCING ON GLASS" (Motley Crue)

On tracks like "SOMEWHERE" and "TAKE MY HEART AWAY" the guys really hit the commercial nail on the head though. Surely if they could get some airplay with these songs then stardom would only be a matter of time away.

Special mention should also be made to the cover version of "STEAL MY THUNDER" which was originally recorded by the brilliant EXPORT (main man Steve Morris actually produced "CUSTOMIZED") and especially to the backing vocal contribution from TONY MILLS of SHY who contributes way above the call of duty.

Overall an album which the guys can be justifiably proud of and one which should see them getting their feet firmly in the Melodic Rock Door!

GREENWAY: SERIOUS BUSINESS (Atlantic)
8½/10

While APRIL WINE have been away from the music scene, BRIAN GREENWAY has been putting together his solo project which has become "SERIOUS BUSINESS" the album. He's roped in many fine musicians to help him with the record, such as Andy Newmark (EX-BALANCE) on drums and the welcome return of A.O.R. Legend ALDO NOVA on keyboards.

The opening cut "IN THE DANGER ZONE" boasts a great guitar solo (courtesy of Alex Lifeson of RUSH) a good strong chorus and excellent musicianship. My only gripe is that Brian's voice could have been a little stronger. But, that aside, the material on offer is superb from the ROCK 'N' ROLL style of the title track with it's wonderful slide guitar solo to the softer tones of the ballad "I CAN'T HOLD BACK".

Brian Greenway has done the (serious) business (sorry) with this album, but don't take my word for it, go and buy it. You won't be disappointed.

MELVIN JAMES: THE PASSENGER (MCA)
7/10

This album poses a problem. Is it,

a) Someone trying to imitate BRYAN ADAMS
or
b) Someone who has the same vocal style but is still musically individual of ADAMS.

I believe it's the latter but you'll have to make up your own mind. From the opening acoustic ballad (a very original and brave thing to do) "WHY WON'T YOU STAY" you can tell the man has talent, not least because he produces, writes, arranges, plays everything except the drums and sings!

Each track is well played and sounds great due to the crystal clear production. Check out the quircky stomp of "TELEPHONE" with it's wierd and wonderful arrangement, or "SUGAR CANDY", all rock 'n' roll power with a great hookline.

A great L.P. well worth the import price, but let's hope the nice people at MCA find the time to give it a U.K. release. Until then, I hope MELVIN JAMES goes from strength to streng[illegible].

CANNATA: IMAGES OF FOREVER (Carrere)
10/10

Jeff Cannata, the man who in '82 released the absolutely mega ARCANGEL album (on PORTRAIT) then seemed to disappear off the music scene, is back in '88 with another blinding brilliant album. This man is a musical genius. Not only does he sing but he writes, produces and plays everything with a little help from old pal Jay Johnson (on guitar), Scott Zito (Guitar) and Jeff Batter (Keys).

The songs stand many miles above all the other A.O.R. keyboards dominated bands around today. Each track is well played and constructed beautifully. Opening track "FORTUNE TELLER" is some what reminicant of "SIDELINES", a track on the ARCANGEL 1.p. whereas "SAILING SHIPS" is full of Jon Anderson-like harmonies. The songs are all so different yet gel together superbly. To pick a favourite track is impossible as they're all so good, suffice to say "IMAGES OF FOREVER" is a superb slice of A.O.R. This could well be a contender for album of the year, so do yourself a favour and buy this album as soon as possible.

ROXANNE: SAME (Scotti Bros)
7/10

Question: What do the following bands have in common. RATT, JUDAS PRIEST, TESLA, LED ZEPPELIN, AEROSMITH, KICK AXE?

Answer: ROXANNE.

Why then should they be reviewed in an A.O.R. mag? Well, mainly because even though the above bands are easily recognisable influences the overall sound (and look) of ROXANNE is of an A.O.R. nature. The group (Jamie Brown on vocals, Joe Infante on bass, John Butler on guitar and David Landry on drums) have taken these influences and moulded them into a powerful Melodic Rock Album. From the opening acoustic intro which explodes into "NOTHING TO LOSE" (a RATT-like cut) to "COMING FOR YOU" with it's JUDAS PRIEST vocal styling, to the brilliant cover version of "PLAY THAT FUNKY MUSIC" , vocals straight out of the AEROSMITH school of singing, the band play well. Each of the ten tracks has it's own definate influences, but those never detract from the overall quality of the material.

One to look out for, I think, you never know, you might listen to it and discover different influences hidden within.

LISA HARTMAN: TIL MY HEART STOPS (Atlantic)
9/10

The singing ability of Lisa Hartman first came to my attention through the awful KNOTS LANDING series in which she played CIJI, a struggling rock singer. So when I actually saw an album of hers I snapped it up. That was '82's "LETTEROCK" album which was surprisingly good. The music ranged from soft, late night ballads to full blown rockers like "HIDIN' FROM LOVE", written by BRYAN ADAMS and "HIDE IN MY HEART" also a cover version this time written by none other than RICK SPRINGFIELD!

'88 sees Lisa back on form with the superb "TIL MY HEART STOPS", a perfect AOR/Soft Rock album which falls somewhere between a heavier version of MARILYN MARTIN and a lighter version of CHER. Produced with crystal clear quality by BILL WRAY and including contributions from such battle hardened beterans as MIKE LANDALL(guitar), WADDY WACHTEL (Guitar), TREVOR RABIN (possibly the most wasted talent on earth), GRAIG KRANPF (Drums), and an utterly superb performance from LARRY KLEIN on Bass, the songs really grow on you and after half a dozen plays you'll be hooked.

"I DON'T NEED LOVE" and "TIL MY HEART STOPS" creep up on you and caress, rather than bludgeon, your senses leaving a lasting impression of quality. The more uptempo cuts though are the highlights, in particular "TEMPT ME", "OUT OF MY SYSTEM" (as good as anything on CHER'S album and featuring a vocal performance from Lisa, which proves she's much more than just a pretty face) "THE DRESS" (written by JAMES HOUSE, a man who deserves to be as big as MICHAEL BOLTON is going to be) and "IMAGINATON".

Definitely an album worthy of your attention and unbiased listening,"TIL MY HEART STOPS" is easily good enough to yield 2 or 3 U.S. hit singles and maybe even, with the wind in the right direction, a U.K. hit single.
LET'S HOPE SO!

HENRY LEE SUMMER: SAME (CBS)
8/10

An excellent debut by HENRY LEE SUMMER full of soulful slabs of prime time A.O.R. much in the same vein of erstwhile genius ERIC MARTIN. Opening cut "I WISH I HAD A GIRL" is a perfect example. Currently riding high in the BILLBOARD chart this cut exemplifies everything that's good about A.O.R. You could imagine yourself driving down the strip with the top down and this cut blasting out. The same can be said of many cuts on this album, especially "HANDS ON THE RADIO" and the brilliant "STILL BEIN' SEVENTEEN", but that's not to say that all the songs sound the same. Tracks like "DARLIN' DANIELLE DON'T" (which in the hands of JOURNEY would have become a classic) and "I'LL HURT FOR YOU" show that HENRY'S roots are firmly in the blues.

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Musically the album is superb with Henry himself playing most of the instruments (as well as writing, producing, arranging and engineering everything), helped out on a few cuts by ACE (geddit?) drummer ANTON FIG.

All in all, Henry Lee Summer has established himself as a major new force in A.O.R. An album deserving of your investigation.

FASTWAY: ON TARGET (GWR)
6/10

A total change of direction (and line-up) for Eddie Clarke has seen Fastway grow from being ZEP dones into being a pretty decent Melodic Rock band. The incorporation of ex-YAYA vocalist LEA HART has been the spark which FASTWAY needed to make them a serious prospect for the late 80's (O.K. his voice sometimes sounds a bit strained but at least he sounds like he belongs to this decade!) The music on offer here is heavily keyboard orientated (supplied by DON AIREY) and wouldnt sound out of place on a SHY or TOBRUK album. At times they even hint at greater things, "CLOSE YOUR EYES" sounding like a NIGHTRANGER out-take.

Best cuts though are the uptempo ones like "DEAD OR ALIVE"(very similar to SHY) "CHANGE OF HEART" and "SHE IS DANGER" which are as good as anything else currently available by a British band.

The musicianship is of a high standard throughout with Eddie at last deserving his nickname. The production (by Eddie and Lea) is also excellent, enhancing the material no end.

So, FASTWAY are back with a new look, new singer and a totally new sound. Give 'em a listen, you may be pleasantly surprised.

CLASSIC CORNER

PREVIEW: SAME (Geffen)

The all-time greatest summertime A.O.R. album is the best way to describe this delicious platter. Released back in '83 and even now, five years later, it still sounds as fresh as ever.

PREVIEW revolve around the writing prowess of ERNIE GOLD who (together with ALAN PASQUA, of RICKSPRINGFIELD'S band on some tracks) has created an amazing amalgam of everything from 38 SPECIAL to the heavier bits (yes there are some) of TOTO. Helped out by the other members, DANNY GOLD (Guitar), ED BETTINELLY (Drums) SKIP PARKER (Bass) and simply the best vocalist this side of RUSSEL ARCARA, JON FIORE, PREVIEW score high marks on every track.

Best of the Rockers are "RED LIGHT", "CAN'T YOU SEE" and "OPEN UP YOUR HEART" with its chorus reminicent of TOTO'S "HOLD THE LINE". But its the medium paced tracks which have me hooked, coming over like 38 SPECIAL on "TOUR DE FORCE" are cuts such as "ALL NIGHT", "NEVER HOLD BACK" and the totally ball-tweaking "SO BLIND" Even the ballads are something else, "RUNNING BACK" deletes anything TOTO could ever come up with and "IT'S OVER" just oozes emotion.

The album was produced by the greatest producer in the world, namely KEITH OLSEN to his usual standard of excellence and includes guest performances by ALAN PASQUA (keys), DENNIS BELLFIELD (bass) CHAS SANDFORD (guitar) TOM KELLY(vocals) and RICHARD PAGE (vocals) whose combines list of credits would fill a whole magazine

Apparantly, PREVIEW, are still together, although without singer Fiore (why I'd dearly love to know GEFFEN) and compiling material with a little help from JACK 'GOD' PONTI for a new album. I await with drooling anticipation.

PLAYLISTS

MARK.J.ASHTON

1. VANDAMNE DEMO.
2. FORTUNE - SAME (MCA)
3. LISA HARTMAN - TIL MY HEART STOPS (ATLANTIC)
4. ROULETTE DEMO '86
5. BONFIRE - DON'T TOUCH THE LIGHT (RCA)

IAN.V.JOHNSON

1. FORTUNE - SAME (MCA)
2. CHINA - SAME (VERTIGO)
3. BONFIRE - FIREWORKS (RCA)
4. WHITECROSS - SAME (PURE METAL)
5. ROXANNE - SAME (SCOTTI BROS)

READER'S REVIEWS

This is your chance to give your opinion of a classic AOR/Melodic Rock album. Write 250 - 300 words about your favourite album (preferably an obscure one) and we'll print it in an upcoming issue. Send your work to the address in the editorial.

COMPETITION TIME

This is your chance to win the new C.D. by BELINDA CARLISLE "HEAVEN ON EARTH" which includes the No.1 single "HEAVEN IS A PLACE ON EARTH" and her new hit "I GET WEAK". We have managed to obtain 2 copies to be won by whoever can answer the simple questions below. Please send entries to the address in the Editorial.

Q. Which band was BELINDA previously a member of?

NB All entries must be in by May 31st.

ADS. SECTION